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ABSTRACT

Designed to give children a sense of the cultural heritage that fairy tales represent, this instructional unit was originally developed to motivate eighth-grade low-level readers and was later adapted for English as a second language classes and for a variety of elementary and secondary school learning levels. Objectives of the unit are to help students (1) develop listening skills by hearing fairy tales and doing various assignments, (2) enjoy reading their choice of fairy tales, (3) distinguish between statements that are "real" and statements that are not "real," (4) become familiar with well-known fairy tales by identifying elements in fairy tales on a matching test, (5) participate in writing assignments that used fairy tales as a theme, (6) learn new vocabulary words from the stories, (7) become familiar with various literary elements found in fantasy such as puns and riddles, (8) become familiar with the literary elements of similes and metaphors, (9) begin to read maps (maps of Disneyland and Oz serve as models), (10) learn to recognize the particular style of fairy tales by filling out a chart during the reading of a story, (11) learn to compare different versions of the same fairy tale, and (12) learn to write descriptive paragraphs. Detailed examples of representative classroom activities are attached, as well as a resource bibliography. (NKA)

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FAIRY TALES AND FANTASY: BRIDGES TO LITERATURE

Using Fairy Tales and Fantasy to Motivate the Reluctant Reader

Joan M. Dungey

All of us have a psychological need (according to Bettleheim) to "wander in the land of faerie." However, too many young people today have missed out on this cultural and literary experience as children, so I use fairy tales as a theme for Language Arts studies in order to give them this background. Besides, it's fun!

Fairy tales can be a bridge to literature; our problem was "How to teach the book when the kids can't read it!" Our students were low-level readers and needed the motivation that a unit on fairy tales could bring. The study of fairy tales can fascinate students of all ages especially as we add audio and video cassette tapes, music, and maps, and Disneyana. Markham (1983) maintains that studying fairy tales is a good introduction to literature and prepares students for more complex analyses, and Babbit (1985) encourages fairy tale and fantasy reading to help students believe that "problems are solvable."

The study of fairy tales gives students a cultural heritage, not only traditionally, but popularly as well, which they may have missed. Walt Disney has influenced our concept of fairy tales - perhaps sometimes to the detriment of the traditional fairy tale!- but his contri-

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bution has infiltrated our culture and cannot be ignored. Students need to understand references they will hear and read. For example, "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?" always reminds us of "The Three Little Pigs", but was popular in its time because of its economic overtones.

This paper will describe and show examples of how to develop fairy tale studies that continue throughout the school year and relate to other school disciplines, bringing a holistic view to literature study. I will suggest activities that incorporate listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Here's how I planned the year. First of all, Mickey Mouse is my "class mascot." His picture is up on the bulletin board at the beginning of the year. I wear a Mickey Mouse watch, etc., etc. I divide the "formal" fairy tale study into three units, corresponding to the school calendar when students are most active:

- the two weeks before Christmas break for general fairy tale study
- the week before spring vacation for The Hobbit
- one of the last weeks of school for The Wizard of Oz.

Throughout the year, I use fairy tale references for grammatical and skill studies. For example:

- I used the cartoon and related story about Mickey's induction into the Army for a test on the rules of capitalization.
- We found prepositions in a newspaper story about a replica of Dorothy's house.

- We used the movie script "The Wizard of Oz" for a pronoun referant study.

In fact, the movie script is really my "text" for Language Arts as we do all sorts of language activities with it - after all it's language too! Rewriting the dialog into prose form, complete with the proper punctuation is a difficult assignment, and followed by a test of the same kind (see Attachment A). Before doing the test, we listen to the cassette or video tape of that section, then role-play the parts. Then, we do the written work. The few minutes it takes to do the pre-test activities is worth the time because of its motivational value. Students clamour for more!

I first developed the unit for low-level readers in eighth grade and adapted activities for ESL (English as a Second Language) classes. Since then, I have taught it to grades five through eleven, on a variety of learning levels, and another teacher adapted activities for grades kindergarten through four.

Your fairy tale units will be determined by materials available. Think about what you want your students to learn and begin writing teaching objectives. As you find more materials, you may add more objectives. A suggested list is on your handout. As I read them, I will give examples of some of the activities we used. To develop a lesson, we brainstormed every possible activity we could think of with the materials we had. Then we selected which ones we would

use and categorized them by objective.

Students will:

1. Develop listening skills by hearing fairy tales and doing various assignments.

Fairy tales, originally told orally, are a good vehicle for listening practice. We began listening activities by telling a classic fairy tale ("Sleeping Beauty") in bard-like fashion. Students were to listen for things that could really happen and those things that could not really happen and fill out a chart (see Attachment B).

2. Enjoy reading their choice of fairy tales.

I had a cart of books in the room, with fairy tales and fantasy on many reading levels. Let me share with you what happened: I did this unit first with junior high students, many of whom were Hispanic. The boys, especially did not want to real the Little Golden Books that I had brought from home. Instead, they selected a thick library book of fairy tales. Well, of course, they couldn't read it! Finally, one took a Little Golden Book, read it successfully, and told someone else about it. Then they all wanted to read them! So, because there was a variety of books on a variety of reading levels, students had a choice.

More advanced students were required to read a fairy tale/fantasy series (see Attachment C).

3. Be able to distinguish between statements that are "real" and statements that are not "real".

Students are often not sure of what is real and what is imaginary in their world of television and cartoons. For example, I have had students that did not believe in earthquakes or volcanoes since they had not experienced them, but did think that the spy shows on television and the crime and violent movies were true. Fairy godmothers that solve all problems are not real either - we just wish that they were! People do not live "happily ever after"; discussions about this helped to clarify reality for students.

4. Become familiar with well-known fairy tales by identifying elements in fairy tales on a matching test.

We had items like "glass slipper", flying to Never-Never Land," "Guess my name!", and "100 years" to match with story names on a pre-test. It was surprising how many students did not know the answers. These then were directed to learning centers where they listened to cassettes and read those stories (see Attachment D).

5. Participate in writing assignments.

We had students take notes onto worksheets which were from lectures, listening to stories, or videotapes. We wrote characterizations and descriptions of characters; for example: dragons, hobbits, old woman . After hearing the story of "Sleeping Beauty", students were then given a printed copy of Grimm's "Briar Rose" to read and write a description of the princess and the old woman. And we asked them to

write an original fairy tale, to change the ending of one, or write a puppet show.

6. Learn new vocabulary words.

I prepared a list of vocabulary words for the spelling list prior to the unit study. (See Attachment E).

These are the objectives I started out with. Then, I started searching for more resources. This unit is not a "pre-packaged" deal bought from a publisher. The inter-disciplinary nature of the unit calls for a variety of resources, to be found in many places.

Thinking first of motivating students to become interested, I first looked for things that were FUN! I always search the children's book department in drug and variety stores for color, sticker, paint-by-water, activity, and punch-out books about fairy tales as well as Little and Big Golden Books. Book stores and libraries offer a more literary selection of fairy tales, and special bindings of Tolkien, Lewis, and Disney. Posters, calendars, and reference books of fantasy creatures (Gnomes, Faeries), maps (Atlas of Fantasy), and analyses of the literary elements of fairy tales helped determine content matter. Comic book and cinema stores have movie scripts (I have "The Wizard of Oz"). There are records and cassettes in variety stores and libraries, some with accompanying books, and View Masters, film clips, and videos to use.

If you visit Disneyland or Walt Disney World, collect memorabilia to share: pictures, maps, tickets, records. I have listed other resources in the handout (see Attachment F).

After doing background reading about the fairy tale motif and gathering more materials, I added the following objectives:

Students will:

7. Be introduced to various literary elements in fantasy such as puns and riddles.

Students read about riddles and spent part of a day solving riddles in groups. Later, they would read the riddle game between Bilbo and Gollem. I defined puns and gave examples:

From the Frank Baum Oz books:

King Krewl
King Kynd

the giant Hartilaf
the butler Nuphsed
Captain Fyter

The Island of Phreex
a hurrycane
He lost his temper. (The king usually kept his temper in his pocket, but one day he lost it along the path.)

The Book of Terms

8. Be introduced to the literary elements of similes and metaphors.

We listened to, read, discussed, and wrote similes and metaphors, especially in The Hobbit unit when the dragon Smaug describes himself:

My teeth are like swords,
My claws, spear,
My wings are hurricanes,
I sharpen my tail on thunderbolts,
And my breath - death!

9. Begin to read maps.

We used a map from Disneyland and then maps from The Hobbit, Middle-earth, and Oz. We even looked at a map of Oz in Japanese and students could see that the Japanese alphabet designated certain recognizable places.

10. Be able to recognize the particular style of fairy tales by filling out a chart during the reading of a fairy tale.

I gave a lecture defining the elements of fairy tales and students were to find those elements in "Briar Rose": prophecy, timelessness, lack of physical description, extremes of good and bad, real and non-real elements, and "happily ever after" (Luthi, 1970). (See Attachment G).

11. Be able to compare different versions of the same fairy tale.

We heard a dramatic presentation of "Sleeping Beauty" on a record from the library, read the Grimm version, and heard the Disney version. Students filled out a comparison chart (see Attachment H). We also heard the Disney version of "Cinderella" and a Spanish version, and compared these on the chart.

12. Be able to write a descriptive paragraph.

As we studied The Hobbit and The Wizard of Oz students did more writing and became more com fortable with

studying characterization (see Attachment I).

I challenge you to add a fairy tale unit to your literature class, not only to motivate our reluctant readers, but also to give them a taste of tradition and lead them to further exploration of "the land of faerie" in their imaginations.

ATTACHMENT A

Punctuation Exercise

THE WIZARD OF OZ

Dorothy, the Scarecrow, and the Tin Woodman were walking on the Yellow Brick Road They came near a forest

Dorothy looked at the forest She said I don't like this forest -- it's creepy and dark

The Tin Man remarked It'll get darker before it gets lighter

Will we meet any wild animals in here asked Dorothy

We may and we may not replied the Tin Woodman

The Scarecrow shivered Hay-eating animals he asked

The Tin Man said nonchalantly Oh, some But mostly lions and tigers and bears

Lions asked Dorothy

And tigers asked the Sacrecrow

The Tin Man nodded And bears he said

Oh my exclaimed Dorothy

They all said Lions and tigers and bears Lions and tigers and bears Oh my Lions and tigers and bears

Suddenly they heard a loud roar They stopped, terrified

ATTACHMENT B

NAME:_____

Fairy Tale:_____

Fill out the chart. List things that could really happen under REAL, and things that could not happen under NOT REAL

REAL	NOT REAL

ATTACHMENT C

FAIRY TALES: ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS

Activities for all:

1. Commit to a daily reading of a fairy tale to a younger student. Study how to help younger students read. Evaluate and write about your experience. Due May 30.

2. If you missed any of the fairy tales on the pre-test, read or listen to those so that you know them.

3. Choose a fairy tale/fantasy series (of at least three books) to read and report on. (One you have not read before. You do not have to finish the series by May 27, but continually be reading and making some report of book and progress.)

   Examples: Chronicles of Narnia
   Oz books
   Lord of the Rings
   Susan Cooper (Under Stone, Over Sea series)
   Dragonsong
   Hero and the Crown (McKinley)
   Stephen Lawhead
   Stephen Donaldson
   Shirley Rousseau Murphy (Ring of Fire, Wolf Bell, etc)
   C.S. Lewis sci fiction trilogy
   George MacDonald
   Andrew Lang (Fairy Tale books)
   Calvin Miller (The Singer, The Song, The Finale)
   Lloyd Alexander (The High King)
   John Christopher
   Ursula LeGuin
   Riddlemaster of Hed series (P. McKillip)
   Mary Stewart's Arthurian trilogy (The Crystal Cave)
   and others....

4. Write an original fairy tale. Due May 27. Guidelines and help will be given.

Projects to choose:

Grades 5-6 choose one; grades 7-11 choose 2. Due May 27.

1. Riddles: Find riddles in fairy tales/fantasy stories. They are often in verse. Write them down of a collection, including where they came from. Ask someone who has read or is reading the book to explain the riddle to you. Write your own riddles, in verses, or in Tech Speak.

2. Maps: Study maps of imaginary countries from literature (i.e. Narnia, Middle Earth, Oz, and other countries from The Atlas of Fantasy. Then make up your own country and draw a map, with labels.

PROJECT: CONTINUED

3. Fantasy beings: Draw a series of pictures depicting imaginary beings. For example: gnomes, troll, elves, dragons, fairies, wizard, witch, etc.

4. Fantasy beings: Write descriptive paragraphs about imaginary beings found in fairy tales/fantasy.

5. The development of story-telling: Trace the development of story-telling on a time line. Show the dates of inventions which affected communication (for example: telephone, radio, movies, television.)

6. Research the differences between:
   - fairy tales
   - fantasy
   - science fiction
   - myths
   - legends
   - saints tales
   - romances
   - folk tales
   - fables

   Write a descriptive paragraph about each one and name an example.

7. Read fairy tales from another country; or read the same fairy tale from many countries. Compare the different versions.

8. Research and write about the legend of King Arthur and the quest for the Grail.

9. Write a fairy tale using puns; or change the ending of a well-known fairy tale; or write a spoof of a fairy tale (i.e. 20 years later); or "modernize" a fairy tale.

10. Read a biography and report about: (choose one)
    - Walt Disney
    - the Grimm Brothers
    - Hans Christian Andersen
    - Charles Perrault
    - Dr Seuss
    - JRR Tolkien
    - C.S. Lewis

    etc....

11. Research, think about, and write: The Christian and Fairy Tales and Fantasy Stories

12. Choose a videotape of a fairy tale. Watch it, analyze it, and prepare learning activities for other students to do as they watch it. For example: The Hobbit, Wizard of Oz, Lord of the Rings, Pinocchio, Return to Oz, Mary Poppins?, Whimsical World of Oz, other fairy tales, etc.....

ATTACHMENT D

FAIRY TALES

Matching: Some may have more than one answer

Put the correct letter or letters on the blank in front of the correct fairy tale.

1. _____	Little Red Riding Hood	a. gingerbread house
2. _____	Snow White	b. a witch in the oven
3. _____	The Frog Prince	c. flying to Never-Neverland
4. _____	Sleeping Beauty	d. "Guess my name!"
5. _____	Rumpelstiltskin	e. Houses of straw, wood, brick
6. _____	Cinderella	f. "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?"
7. _____	Hansel and Gretel	g. spinning straw into gold
8. _____	Pinocchio	h. "What big eyes you have!" "The better to see you, my dear."
9. _____	Three Little Pigs	i. glass or golden slipper
10. _____	Peter Pan	j. a whale
11. _____	Jack and the Beanstalk	k. a cow traded for magic beans
12. _____	Wizard of Oz	l. Geppeto
13. _____	Rapunzel	m. a living puppet
		n. 100 years
		o. Kissing an animal
		p. a castle covered with thorns
		q. Yellow brick road
		r. Poisoned apple, comb
		s. Emerald City
		t. Going to Grandmother's house
		u. Tinker Bell
		v. long hair

(After grading the test)
Write the name(s) of the fairy tales you missed here:

_____

_____

_____

Be sure to read or listen to the stories of these fairy tales.

ATTACHMENT E

Fantasy Vocabulary list

1. literature
2. literary
3. minstrel
4. bard
5. fiction
6. non-fiction
7. character
8. environment
9. interaction
10. principle
11. fantasy
12. imagination
13. personification
14. enchantment
15. tradition
16. prophecy
17. repetition
18. consistent
19. dwarf
20. elf
21. wizard
22. analyze
23. supernatural
24. original
25. universal

ATTACHMENT F

RESOURCES

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ATTACHMENT G

ELEMENTS OF FAIRY TALE STYLE

Fairy Tale: _____ Bibliography of book:

Characteristics of fairy tales	Example(s)	Page
1. Timelessness		
2. No detailed description		
3. Clarity		
4. Extremes		
5. Repetition		
6. Prophecy		
7. Limitation		
8. Happy ending		
9. Universal truth		
10. Supernatural event		

ATTACHMENT H

COMPARISONS OF FAIRY TALE VERSIONS

FAIRY TALE: Sleeping Beauty

	Grimm	Drama	Disney
Prophecy			
Good			
Bad			
Timelessness			
Time			
Place			
Magic			
Hero/Heroine			
Happy ending			

ATTACHMENT I

Movie worksheet: THE WIZARD OF OZ

TO DO BEFORE THE MOVIE:

Read: The Wizard of Oz is literature, because it is still popular after many years and appeals to both young and old. It deals with ordinary people (like you and me) that experience marvelous and magical things. The characters must fulfill a quest, against insurmountable odds; yet they succeed.

I. Write the definition of the following words:

ordinary
marvelous
fulfill
insurmountable
quest
succeed

II. Write what quests are in the story:

a.
b.
c.
d.
e.

III. Identify the insurmountable obstacle in the sotry:

TO DO DURING THE MOVIE:

Characters

I. Write adjectives that describe each of the following characters:

DOROTHY	SCARECROW	TIN MAN	LION	WICKED WITCH
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

II. The characters have real personalities. Most people like them very much. Jot down three reasons you like them or don't like them.

DOROTHY

SCARECROW

TIN MAN

LION

III. Emotions

The film has some very sad parts, happy parts, funny parts, exciting parts, scary parts. Take notes of these situations.

SAD

HAPPY

FUNNY

SCARY

EXCITING

TO DO AFTER THE FILM:

1. Select one character. On your own paper, write a paragraph (4-5 sentences) describing him or her. (Do not tell actions, but only descriptions. Use adjectives and personality traits as listed on your charts.)

2. Write another paragraph telling how your character relates to the other major characters. Tell how they get along, if they are friendly or not, if they help each other or not and why.

3. Be prepared to identify on a quiz the emotional scenes, telling which are happy, sad, funny, or scary.